

SHOW

THE
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OF
THE
ARTS

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LAURENCE HOPE
THE EXOTIC
INDIA
OF A PASSIONATE
VICTORIAN

PLAYBOY GIRL
(PART II)

DALÍ'S LATEST:
HIS MASTERPIECE?

MURROW AND THE
NEW USA

A Bunny's Tale Part II

by Gloria Steinem

Editors' note: As you will remember from last month, our intrepid reporter had adopted a false name (Marie Ochs), answered a classified ad ("Yes, it's true! Attractive young girls can now earn \$200-\$300 a week at the fabulous New York Playboy Club...") and survived two interviews and a tryout in costume to be hired as a Playboy Club Bunny. After a fitting for false eyelashes, a physical examination, a Bunny Mother Lecture, a Bunny Father Lecture, two indoctrination sessions in Bunny School to learn drink-serving rituals, a study of the Bunny Bible and the revelation that nearly all Bunnies are required to stuff their bosoms, Marie had been called into emergency service at the hat-check stand.

As the story reopens, our undercover Bunny is preparing for her very first night's exposure "on the floor."

Tuesday 5th

The Bunny Room was chaotic and jammed with the usual assortment of girls in high heels and little else. I was pushed and tugged and zipped into my electric-blue costume by the wardrobe mistress, but this time she allowed me to stuff my own bosom and I was able to get away with only half a dry-cleaner's bag. I added the tiny collar with clip-on bow tie and the starched cuffs with Playboy cufflinks. My name plate was centered in a ribbon rosette like those won in horse shows, and I pinned it just above my bare right hipbone. A major policy change, I was told, had just shifted name tags from left hip to right. The wardrobe mistress also gave me a Bunny jacket: it was a below-zero night and I was to stand by the front door. The jacket turned out to be a brief shrug of imitation white fur that covered the shoulders but left the bosom carefully bare.

I went in to be inspected by Bunny Mother Sheralee. "You look *sweet*," she said, and advised that I keep any money I had with me in my costume. "Two more girls have had things stolen from lockers," she said, and added that I should be sure and tell the Lobby Director the exact amount of money I had with me. "Otherwise they may think you stole tips." Table Bunnies, she explained, were allowed to keep any tips they might receive in cash, though the Club did take up to 50 percent of all their charge tips, but Hat Check Bunnies could keep no tips at all. Instead, they were paid a flat \$12 for eight hours. I told her that \$12 a day seemed a good deal less than the salary of \$200 to \$300 mentioned in the advertisement. "Well, you won't work Hat Check all the time, sweetie," she said. "When you start working as a Table Bunny, too, you'll see how it all averages out."

I took a last look at myself in the mirror. A creature with $\frac{3}{4}$ " eyelashes, blue satin ears and an overflowing bosom looked back. I

asked Sheralee if we had to stuff ourselves so much. "Of course you do," she said. "Practically all the girls just stuff and stuff. That's the way Bunnies are supposed to look." I nodded and turned toward the door of her small, cement-block office. "Good luck!" she said cheerfully, "and if anybody tries to pull your tail, just report him to the Room Director."

The elevator opened on the mezzanine, and I made my professional debut in the Playboy Club. It was crowded, noisy and very dark. A group of men with organizational name tags on their lapels stood nearby. "Here's my Bunny Honey now," said one, and flung his arm around my shoulders as if we were fellow halfbacks leaving the field.

"Please, sir," I said, and uttered the ritual sentence we had learned from the Bunny Father lecture, "you are not allowed to touch the Bunnies." His companions laughed and laughed. "Boy, oh boy, guess she told you!" said one, and tweaked my tail as I walked away.

I climbed down the carpeted spiral stairs between the mezzanine ("Living Room, Piano Bar, buffet dinner now being served") and the lobby ("Check your coats, immediate seating in the Playmate Bar"). They are separated from the street by only a two-story sheet of glass. Customers were lined up on the sidewalk, and a group of men in workmen's jackets were standing with their faces pressed to the glass. The only alternative was a broad staircase that descended into the back of the lobby from the Living Room, but that too could be seen from the street. All of us, customers and Bunnies alike, were intended to be a living window display. I reported to the Lobby Director. "Hello, Bunny Marie," he said, "how's things?" I told him that I had \$15 in my costume. "I'll remember," he said. I had a quick vision of all the Hat Check Bunnies lined up for bosom inspection.

There was a four-deep crowd of impatient men surrounding the Hat Check Room. The Head Hat Check Bunny, a little blonde who had been imported from Chicago to straighten out the system, told me to take their tickets and call the numbers out to two "hang boys" behind the counter. "I'll give you my number if you give me yours," said a balding man, and he turned to the crowd for appreciation.

After an hour of helping men on with coats, scarves and hats, the cocktail rush had subsided enough for the Chicago Bunny to show me how to pin numbers on coat lapels with straight pins or tuck them in hatbands. She gave me more ritual sentences. "Thank you, sir, here is your ticket," "The Information Bunny is downstairs to your right," and "Sorry, but we're unable to take ladies' coats." She emphasized that I was to put all tips in a slotted box attached to the wall, smile gratefully and not tell the customers



Our Bunny Marie "on the floor"

that the tips went to the Club. She moved to the other half of the check room ("The blue tickets are next door, sir") and sent a tall, heavy-set Swiss Bunny to take her place.

The two of us took care of a small stream of customers and talked little. I settled down to my ever-present worry that someone, anyone, I knew was going to come in, recognize me and say "Gloria!" If the rumor was true that one newspaper and one news magazine reporter had tried to become Bunnies and failed, the management must be alert to the possibility, and I had seen more than enough Sydney Greenstreet movies to worry about the Club's reaction. I decided that if someone I knew did come in, I would just keep repeating, "There must be some mistake" and hope for the best.

Dinner traffic began, and soon there was a crowd of 20 men waiting. We worked quickly, but coats going in and out at the same time and in the same place made for confusion. One customer was blundering about behind the counter in search of a lost hat and two more were complaining loudly that they had been waiting ten minutes. We ran out of checks and began sending men to the third-floor check room until we could sort out more. "The reason there's a line outside this place," said one, "is because they're waiting for their coats." A man in a blue silk suit reached out to pull my tail. I dodged and held a coat for a balding man with a row of ballpoint pens in his suit pocket. He put it on, but backwards, so that his arms were around me. The hang boy yelled at him in a thick Spanish accent to "Leave her alone." He told the hang boy to shut up. Three women in mink stoles stood waiting for their husbands, and I could see them staring, not with envy but coldly, as if measuring themselves against the Swiss Bunny and me. High up on the opposite wall, a camera stared down at all of us and transmitted the scene to screens imbedded in walls all over the Club, including one screen outside over the sidewalk, "... the closed-circuit television camera that flashes your arrival throughout the Club..." explained publicity folders. I was overcome by a nightmare sensation of walking naked through crowds, but the only way out was to climb that winding, glass-encased stairway again. Men were still pressing forward with coats outstretched. I turned to the hang boy for more tickets. "Don't worry," he said kindly and smiled. "You get used to it."

Business let up again. I asked the Swiss Bunny if she liked the work. "Not really," she shrugged. "I was an airline hostess for awhile, but once you've seen Hong Kong, you've seen it." A man asked for his coat. I turned around and found myself face to face with two people whom I knew well, a television executive and his wife. I looked down as I took his ticket and kept my back turned while the boy found the coat, but I

had to face him again to deliver it. My television friend looked directly at me, gave me a 50-cent piece and walked away. I breathed again. Neither he nor his wife had recognized me. I helped a slight, shy-looking man put on his coat and a long blue and white scarf. To celebrate my victory, I asked him if he and the scarf were from Yale. "Yes," he said, and looked startled, as if he had been recognized at a masquerade.



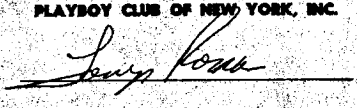
There were no clocks anywhere in the Club. I asked the hang boy what time it was. "One o'clock," he said. I had been working for more than five hours with no break. My fingers were perforated and sore from pushing straight pins through cardboard, my arms ached from holding heavy coats. I was thoroughly chilled from the icy wind that blew in each time a customer opened the door, and, inside my three-inch black satin high heels, my feet were killing me. I walked over to ask the Chicago Bunny if I could take a break. Yes, she said, I could have a half-hour to eat, but no more.

Down the hall from the Bunny Room was the Employees' Lounge, where our meal tickets entitled us to one free meal a day. I pulled a metal folding chair up to a long bare table, took my shoes off gingerly and sat down next to two Negroes in gray work uniforms. They looked sympathetic. One was young and quite handsome, the other middle-aged and graying at the temples: like all employees at the Club, they seemed chosen, at least partly, for their appearance. The older one advised me about rolling bottles under my feet to relax them and getting arch supports for my shoes. I asked

were very kind.

Back downstairs, I tried to categorize the customers as I checked their coats. With the exception of a few teenage couples, the majority seemed to be middle-aged businessmen. Less than half had women with them, and the rest came in large, expense-account bunches. I saw only four of the type I had imagined, the type pictured in Club advertisements—the young, lean, nattily dressed Urban Man—and they were with slender, fashionable girls who looked rather appalled by our stuffed costumes and bright makeup. Many of the businessmen's wives appeared to be measuring themselves against us, but some, the least confident ones, didn't try. They seemed to take it as a matter of course that their husbands would be attracted to us, and they stood aside, looking embarrassed. There were a few customers, a very few, either men or women (I counted ten), who looked at us not as objects but smiled and nodded calmly as if we might be human beings.

The Swiss Bunny took a break, and the hang boy who had told me that I would "get used to it" began to give me a gentle lecture. I was foolish, he said, to put all that money in the box. The tips were cash. Nobody knew how much money there was. If we didn't take it, the man who counted it might. I told him that I was afraid they would look in my costume and that I didn't want to get fired. "They only check you girls once in a while," he said. "Anyway, I make you a deal. You give me money. I meet you outside. We split it." My feet ached, my fingers were sticky from dozens of sweaty hatbands and

		PLAYBOY CLUB OF NEW YORK, INC.		No. 3165		1-103 210	
5 EAST 50th STREET — NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK		Payroll Accountant					
PAY TO THE ORDER OF		AMOUNT	CHECK NO.	DATE	AMOUNT		
M. OCHS			3165	FEB 10 63	\$35.90		
BANKERS TRUST COMPANY		14					
485 PARK AVENUE NEW YORK, N. Y.		⑆02⑆0⑆0103⑆14⑆40767257⑆					

what they did. "We're garbage men," said the younger. "It don't sound so good, I know, but it's easier than your job." They told me I should eat something and gestured to the beef stew on their paper plates. "Friday we get fish," one said, "but every other day is the same stew." "The same, maybe 'cept it get worse," said the other, and laughed. The older one told me he felt sorry for the Bunnies even though he knew that some of them enjoyed "showing off their looks." He told me to be careful of my feet and not to try to work double shifts. They

my skin was gouged and sore from the bones of the costume. I calculated that even the half-hour dinner break had been on my own time so that the Club was getting a full eight hours of work, and I felt resentful enough to take him up on it. Still, it would hardly do to get fired for stealing. I told him that I was a new Bunny and too nervous to try it. "You'll get over that," he said. "One Saturday night last week, this check room took in \$1,000 in tips. And you know how much we get paid. You think about that."

It was almost 4 A.M. and quitting time.

The Lobby Director came over to tell us that the customer count for the night was about 2,000. I said that sounded good. "No," he said. "Good is 4,000."

I went back to the Bunny Room, turned in my costume and sat motionless, too tired to move. The stays had made precise indentations in my skin and the zipper had left a welt over my spine. I complained of the costume's tightness to the Bunny who was sitting next to me, also motionless. "Yeah," she said, "a lot of girls say their legs get numb from the knee up. I think it presses on a nerve or something."

The street was deserted, but a taxi waited at the curb. I left by the employees' exit and emerged next to the white canopies of the Club's entrance. The driver held a dollar bill out the window. "I got four more of these," he said. "Is that enough?"

I kept on walking. "Whats'a matter?" he said, irritated. "You work in there, don't you?"

Fifth Avenue was brightly lit and its sidewalks sparkled with frost. As I walked the last block to my apartment, I passed a gray English car with the motor running. A woman was sitting in the driver's seat, smoking a cigarette and watching the street. Her hair was bright blonde and her coat bright red. She looked at me and smiled. I smiled back. She looked available and was. Of the two of us, she seemed the more honest. Or maybe I was just overtired.

Wednesday 6th

I got up just in time to rush back to the Club for my two o'clock Table Bunny Training and arrived feeling that I had never left. As I changed into my costume, one of the Bunnies was reading aloud from the current issue of a weekly tabloid called *Leo Shull's Show Guide*. "Listen to this," she said. "It says, 'Although a thousand girls were interviewed for the club and 125 are working there now, the Playboy Club's fantastic business, the lines and crowds of customers thronging there daily, have made it necessary to add another 50 Bunnies.'" I had heard Sheralee say that she was very short-handed with only 103 Bunnies on schedule. I asked the girl who was reading if we really needed that many more. They probably did, she said, because the Club had opened with 140 Bunnies and nearly 50 of them had quit. Another girl disagreed. "I heard that 20 of them were fired and 40 more quit, but I think it's more than that because we've only got about a hundred now and a lot of them are new Bunnies." I said I was going to ask Miss Shay, just out of curiosity, how many of the original Bunnies quit. "Don't bother, sweetie. Nobody around here ever tells us anything."

I picked up the paper and read on: "The girls, in this reporter's opinion, are the most beautiful ladies ever seen together under one roof. Most of them have superior education as well, and fine breeding. They are trained

to give the optimum in restaurant service. . . . Their earnings are three to ten times as much as they could earn in any similar position. Average earnings are \$200 to \$300 and 'Bunnies' meet the most attractive people. . . ." The article ended with the address of the Club and instructions on how to apply. "Two hundred dollars to \$300 a *what*," said the dissident Bunny, "a month?" I asked how much she earned. "I got \$108 this week," she said, "and the girl with the biggest check got \$145." I asked if she was waiting on tables. She said she was. "The next time Leo Shull comes in here, I'm going to ask him where he gets his figures." "Watch out," said the newspaper Bunny, "he's a Number One Keyholder. Besides," she said seriously, "somebody told me that a couple of the girls *have* made \$200."

Sheralee called me into her office. She was still desperate for "over-21 girls" who could work until four in the morning. Would I take the hat check concession again that night? I deliberated. It was a chance to work again before Miss Shay, the Personnel Director, tried to check some of my uncheckable references, or remembered that I had never turned in the requested birth certificate to prove I was over 21, or got word from the Michigan birth registration office that there was no such person as Marie Ochs. On the other hand, I had slept six hours since my last ordeal and would be training as a Table Bunny from 2:00 to 6:00 that afternoon before going right back to a full day's work again at 7:30. My feet were still so swollen from the night before that I could barely get my regulation three-inch heels on, and I had gauze wrapped around my middle where the costume had dug in. I decided to take a chance on not being found out for a little longer and explained my tiredness to Sheralee. Couldn't she find someone else? "I'll try," she said, and looked annoyed. "But if I can't, I'm still counting on you."

I took the elevator to the mezzanine again and crossed to the spiral stairs. To be in that costume walking down that staircase seemed even more surrealistic in broad daylight, with dozens of lunchtime shoppers staring in through the glass, than it had the night before. One of the Room Directors was waiting for me at the bottom. "Go back up and come down again," he said, gesturing toward the crowds in the street. "Give the boys a treat." Disobeying a Room Director was an automatic 15 demerits, according to the Bunny Bible. I searched for an excuse. "Look," I said, "I'm late to meet a Number One Keyholder." "Go ahead, kid," he said and smiled. "Get a move on."

I walked down the stairs at the back of the lobby to the Playmate Bar, where I was to report for training. It had been dark and deserted when I came there for my first interview with Miss Shay. Now it was alive with a lunchtime crowd and the wall behind the bar glowed with blown-up color transparencies of semi nude Playmates from the center-spread of *Playboy*. (Continued on page 110)

A BUNNY'S TALE: PART II

(Continued from page 68)

I went to the service area at the end of the bar and set up a tray with bar cloth, Playboy lighter and all the other items that had been prescribed in Bunny School the day before. My Training Bunny gave me checks and told me to follow her as she made the rounds of her station. She introduced me at each table, saying, "This is Bunny Marie and she is a Bunny in training." At the last table, two men told me I would be O.K. if I did everything they said, and the first thing to do was get rid of my sourpuss Training Bunny. "Don't pay any attention to those jerks," she said. "They've been guzzling all afternoon and just think they're smart." I said maybe they were from Willmark* and being difficult just to test her. "Don't be silly," she said. "You can always spot a Willmark man. He never has more than two drinks."

Two of her tables were empty, and she told me to wait on anyone who sat there. My first two customers carried plastic briefcases and wore veterans' buttons in their lapels. I approached them as confidently as I could and embarked on the serving ritual. "Good afternoon, sir, I am your Bunny Marie," I said, and put a napkin in front of each ("... this procedure informs the Room Director which guests have been served ..."), taking care to look directly at him as I did so ("... eye contact each of your guests immediately"). "May I see the member's key, please?" One of the customers gave me his Playboy Club key together with a room key from the Hotel Astor. I gave back the hotel key and started to fill out the check. "Well," he said, "you can't blame a man for trying." "Nope," said his friend, "you can't tell us your address but nothing's to stop you from remembering ours." He slapped the table and laughed. They both ordered Old Fashioneds.

I filled glasses with ice, called the order in at the bar and asked how I was supposed to put in the proper garbage.† "With your hands, how else?" said the bartender. I picked up two orange slices and dredged around in a large trough full of juice until I found two cherries. With the drinks balanced on my tray, I approached the two veterans. "Are you married?" asked the table-slapper. I said no. "Well, it wouldn't matter anyway, because I'm married too!" I put my right hip into the table, bent my knees, inclined myself backward in the required Bunny Dip and placed the glasses squarely on the napkins. I felt like an idiot.

"You're doing just fine," my Training Bunny whispered sweetly, and yelled, "One J&B, one CC and two Martinis straight up," at the bartender.

I waited on three more parties, all men. Two said, "If you're my Bunny, can I take you home?" and one asked if my picture was above

*Representatives of Willmark, Inc., retained by the Playboy Club to pose as customers while testing Bunnies for efficiency, cheerfulness, clean tails, etc., and whether or not Bunnies will accept dates (they aren't supposed to) with or without the lure of money.
†Bunny-ese for drink garnishes.

the bar. My veterans left me a dollar tip. I thanked them and told them they were my first customers. The table-slapper punched his friend in the arm and doubled over with laughter. "This girl," he said, still laughing, "this girl's a *Virgin Bunny!*" He wiped tears from his eyes.

At 6:00, I turned my checks back to the Training Bunny. All the tips that had been charged on them went to her, which was presumably her reward for training. I told her the veterans had left a dollar. "You can keep it," she said magnanimously. I tucked it into the Vault,* as I had seen the other Bunnies do, and went upstairs to change.

I was unfurling the plastic dry cleaner's bag from my bosom when Miss Shay entered the Bunny Room. I had never seen her there before and I was sure my lack of credentials had caught up with me. She might not have been aware of my emergency call to hat check duty, but she probably did know about tomorrow's assignment of serving drinks from 8:00 to midnight. Miss Shay stopped next to me. "Keep up the good work," she said, confidentially. "I hear you're a very good Bunny."

I was elated, and decided to risk asking about "the other Marie Ochs." Ever since my first interview when Miss Shay startled me by saying that another girl with my name had applied, I had been curious and a little worried. "What other Marie Ochs?" she said, and disappeared into the Bunny Mother's office.

I am at home and Sheralee has just phoned to say that she found another Hat Check Bunny for tonight. My luck is holding.

7th

Thursday
I went to the Bunny Room an hour early tonight to see what I could learn about my sister Bunnies. I had read in newspapers before the Club opened that many were college girls, actresses, artists and even linguists. I asked the Bunny dressing next to me about the linguists, who intrigued me most. She said yes, there were quite a few foreign girls working the VIP Room. (As I had read in the Bunny Bible, "That stands for Very Important Playboy, of course.") In fact, they had to be foreign and speak English with an accent to work in this room specializing in dinner and midnight supper. I said it sounded as if Bunnies made a lot of money there. "Not really," she said. "It only seats 50 and it's for dinner so the turnover is slow. You're better off serving drinks and getting the jerks in and out fast." I asked about the college girls. "Oh sure," she said, "I think there are three or four who go to classes during the week and work on weekends." How could they always get the weekends, which were the big tip nights? "Listen, friend," she said, "there are some people around here who get to pick whatever shift they want, and the rest of us get stuck with a week of lunches or that lousy hat check bit. Mostly, it's the old girls from Chicago or somebody

*Where Bunnies keep tips, i.e., their bosoms.

who's got an 'in' with the management." Couldn't that just be seniority? "Sure," she said, searching for a place to put the Bunny ears on her upswept hairdo, "only there isn't supposed to be a seniority system. 'You're all treated alike, that's what they tell us.' I asked what she had done before becoming a Bunny. "Nothing much, a little modeling once in a while." And what did she hope working as a Bunny would lead to? "I thought maybe I could save enough money to get some test shots and a composite and I could be a real model," she said. "But after three months of this, I want to get married. Guys I wouldn't look at before, now I think they aren't so bad."

I moved to the other side of the dressing table where four girls were eating doughnuts and drinking chocolate milk ("... eating in the Bunny Room, 5 demerits...") and introduced myself as a new Bunny. First-name introductions were made all around. They seemed glad of a diversion and offered me a doughnut. I asked about the college girls again. "Yeah, there are some," said one. "I met a girl the other day, she was taking a course in photography." I asked what they had done before, and what they wanted to do. Three said they wanted very much to be photographic or live models, not high fashion, but in advertising or the garment industry. The fourth said that she was married, had a baby and was just picking up money as a Bunny because she wasn't trained for anything. They asked about me and I repeated what I had put on my application blank as a likely, but not startling, background for a Bunny: that I had worked as a waitress (true, though it was during college vacations), that I had danced in nightclubs and once hoped to be a professional dancer (also true, though I had to do some switching of dates to make myself younger), and that I had most recently worked as an office clerk (untrue, but it was the only thing I could make up references for). "Say, you've done a lot," said the girl who was hoping to crash the garment industry. "What the hell do you want to be a Bunny for?" I told them that everything I'd heard about the Club sounded great, and I read to them the latest *Playboy Club News*: "Bunnies don't give up wages for glamor. A Bunny can easily earn twice the amount in a week that a good secretary averages. ... An exciting extra is the anticipation of being discovered. Many Bunnies have moved on into the entertainment field and now can be seen in movies, nightclub acts or as models. ... There was a small silence. "Well, sure," said one, "if they say that, it must have happened to some girls." Another said that one of the Chicago Bunnies had been on the cover of *Playboy* about a year ago, and that there was supposed to be a Bunny on a cover again soon. "Yeah," said a third, "but I hear that's just because they're short of Bunnies and they're trying to get more."

It was nearly eight o'clock, time to put on my bright orange costume (more comfortable, I hoped, than the electric blue) and serve

drinks in the Living Room.

Again I had a Training Bunny whose checks I used, but this time I had a whole station to take care of because one Table Bunny was missing. "Wouldn't you know it," said my Training Bunny. "A girl gets in a car accident and it has to be from my shift."

My tables were in the Cartoon Corner, i.e., a corner of the Living Room that was walled with mounted cartoons from *Playboy*. It was considered a difficult station because it was the depth of the building from the bar, with four steps to climb in between. The Bunny Tray Technique involved carrying our small round trays high and balanced on the palm of the left hand as we looked straight ahead and did the stylish, faintly wiggly, Bunny Walk. It seemed simple enough, but after an hour of carrying trays loaded with ice cubes, full bottles of mixes and a half-dozen drinks, my left arm began to shake and the blood seemed permanently drained from its fingers and hand. And I was still not getting paid. I complained to my Training Bunny but she said I really had no grounds for it. The girls hired before the December opening of the Club had trained for three weeks with no pay.

I did learn a lot. I served 22 customers, spilled two drinks (one on me and one on a customer) and got propositioned twice. I also learned from the musicians at the Piano Bar that there is a song called "Playboy's Theme"* and that these are some of its lyrics:

*If your boy's a PLAYBOY,
Loosen your control.
If his eye meanders,
Sweet goose your gander's,
Just one more orney critter,
Who goes for the glitter.
So if you've been over-heatin'
your oven,
Just remember that the boy is
a PLAYBOY,
And the gal that makes a fireside
lovin' man of the boy,
Gets him to stay.
Never talks to him but sweetly,
When he plays it indiscreetly,
Never takes the play completely
Away.*

One of the diverse duties of the Willmark men is to make sure that this theme is played at the beginning and end of every musical show every evening. Like "God Save the Queen."

8th

Friday
Tonight was my first as a full-fledged professional Table Bunny, but at the moment, I am almost totally absorbed in my feet. Because they hurt. They ache like teeth and are so swollen that I can't get sneakers on. The thought foremost in my mind is that my arches may be falling, but random impressions do come back.

Item: I had all the tables in Cartoon Corner, twice as many as last night, from 7:30 to 4:00 in the morning with no break. Loaded trays to balance on one hand, 16 round trips to the bar each hour until I lost

*Used by permission of Copyright owner Edwin H. Morris & Company, Inc.

count, three iced drinks spilled down my back and two green olives to eat all evening. Why didn't I just give up, lie down, kick, refuse? I wish I knew.

Item: The bartender in the Living Room is an artist. Fast, graceful, exact and calm, he kept the room going almost single-handedly. "Last week, including overtime and bonus," he said, "I made \$180 and I'm the highest-paid bartender in the house." Why doesn't he quit? "I'm going to."

Item: Customers' drinks are garnished by Bunny-hand, and employees eat on the run from communal plates of food swiped from the customers' buffet. We're one big family.

Item: \$29.85 in cash tips—all in one-dollar bills and silver—makes for prosperity and a very uncomfortable costume. And I lost five pounds last night.

Saturday 9th

My arches did not fall. I put on my rain boots and went to a chiropodist ("I do all the Copa girls") who said there was nothing wrong with my feet except long hours, high heels and muscle strain. "In a job like that," he said cheerfully, "your feet are bound to get a few sizes bigger."

I worked the Living Room again tonight, but at a station right next to the bar, and 9:30 to 3:00 instead of 7:30 to 4:00. By wearing borrowed shoes three sizes too large and coax-

ing busboys to help me carry heavy trays, I managed to get through it and was rewarded with the following bits of information:

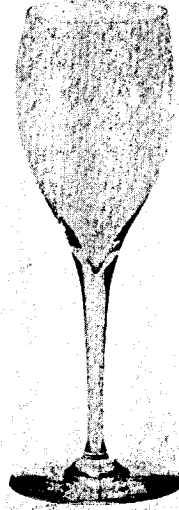
1. A Bunny who has been a Playmate—that is, who has posed for the fold-out picture in *Playboy*—gets \$5 a day more salary than other Bunnies. She is also obliged to approach customers with, "I'm your Playmate Sue" instead of "I'm your Bunny Sue."

2. In a letter written to mollify New Yorkers who had bought keys to the Club, which is now open to the public, Hugh Hefner said that nonmembers "must secure a temporary pass good for one visit only and they must pay cash in advance for anything they order before they are served." Perhaps it is contrary to Mr. Hefner's instructions, but Bunnies are told to collect *after* each round on cash sales, but there are few who do even that. Most of the ones I questioned say that they allow cash customers to run up bar bills just as if they were keyholders. If anything, Bunnies seem to prefer serving a nonmember because they are assured of getting a cash tip instead of splitting a charge tip with the house.

3. Bunnies and busboys have a fascinating kind of love-hate relationship. A good busboy can make a Bunny wealthier by keeping her tables cleared for new customers. A bad busboy can send her to the poorhouse by whisking away cash tips before she sees them and insisting that the customer stifle* her. As a

*Did not leave a tip.

BACCARAT



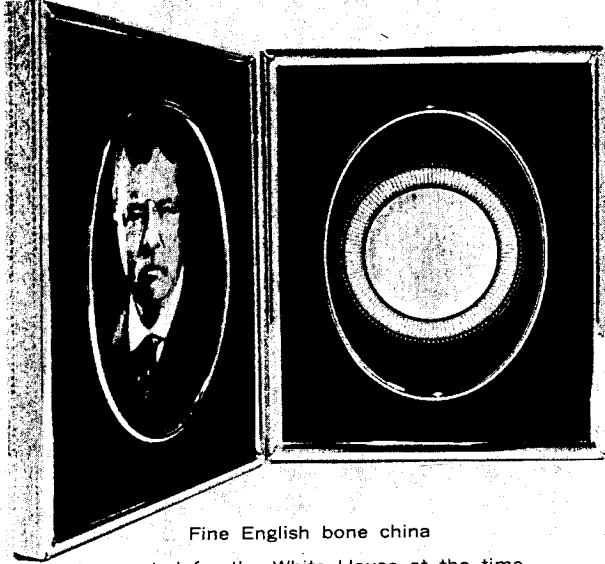
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result, a Bunny may spend all her working hours cajoling and vamping a boy whom she wouldn't dream of spending time on outside the Club. It's a hothouse relationship, but a close one. Like women and their hairdressers, they tell each other everything.

4. Plastic dry cleaner's bags are regarded as dangerous stuffing by many Bunnies because they make you perspire, thereby causing a weight loss where you least want it. Kleenex and absorbent cotton are preferred.

5. The Way to Get Something to Eat Though a Table Bunny is to snatch it from the customers' buffet (on pain of instant dismissal, according to a recent memo) and hide it in the supply room. You can then grab a bite whenever you pass through. Almost no one goes to the Employees' Room to eat stew.

Sunday 10th

I got home at 4 A.M. and had to be back at the Club and in costume by 11 A.M. for publicity photos. I was furious at first (25 demerits if I didn't show up), but once awake and outside, I was glad: it was the first time in nearly three days that I'd seen full daylight.

The *Playboy* photographer was posing girls on the broad curving staircase at the back of the lobby. Each of us was put through a cheese-cake series: sitting on the steps with legs outstretched, standing with our hands posed on the railing ("bend over from the waist, dear, over a

little more...") and walking down the stairs with tray held high.

I asked what the photographs would be used for. "I don't know," he said, "I just got rush orders from Chicago." As a matter of routine, new Bunnies were asked to sign a release of all photographs. Would our pictures turn up in some *Playboy* Club promotion, or in *Playboy* itself? No one knew.

A voice called to me from the darkness of the Playmate Bar. It was Miss Shay, sitting at the desk where I had first seen her, waiting for prospective Bunnies to come in for interviews. The photographer had asked if we could turn on taped music. "Marie will play," she said. "Marie plays the piano very well, don't you, dear?" No, I said, I didn't play at all. "I'm sure you told me so when I interviewed you," she said firmly.

The oversight of my credentials, the other Marie Ochs and now my piano playing: it seemed that Miss Shay, though very efficient in most areas, didn't have a very good memory. I thought of the several times I had heard her call busboys by an exact first name but not the right one. That was the explanation. For the first time I was quite sure that, unless someone actually recognized me, I could work at the Playboy Club as long as I liked.

Out in the bright sunlight again, I wondered just how long I did want to stay. If Marie wasn't going to be discovered, I would have to end her career, and my impulse was to do it immediately.

Still, I had lived through those

weekend nights which were the worst of it. According to this week's Bunny Schedule, I would be serving lunch for four hours each day and no more. It wasn't an envied assignment because the tips were bad, but it would give me more time to talk to Bunnies.

I decided that Marie could live until next Friday.

Monday **11**th

A story in today's *Metropolitan Daily* was the talk of the Bunny Room. One of two ex-Bunnies who are suing the Club for back tips and "misrepresentation" has told reporters that she received anonymous death threats immediately after filing the suit.

"I knew Phyllis Sands," said one girl, "but not this Betsy McMillan who got the threats." She studied their pictures. "They made sure to give out good publicity shots." Did she think the alleged threats were made up just for publicity? "Who knows?" she shrugged. "Maybe she wasn't told that the Club would take half her tips and maybe her salary was a lot lower than she had expected. On the other hand, maybe she just had her boyfriend call up and threaten her so she'd get her name in the paper. Who knows?"

I went downstairs to the Playroom and began setting up tables for lunch. Of the six other Bunnies, I had met three: a Chinese Bunny, a Bunny who announced that she

didn't have to stuff her bosom and the big, baby-voiced redhead whom I'd met the first day in the Bunny Room. The Room Director assigned us our stations, and we sat down on the apron of the stage to wait for customers. The un-stuffed Bunny talked about how much better tips were in Chicago, and I asked why. "Well, they're dumber there," she said. "I mean it's easier to make them think you'll go out with them, and then they tip you more." "It's lousy at the Miami Club, too," said baby voice. "One time we all got together and said we'd quit if they didn't pay us more, but they said to go right ahead, they'd just hire more girls." I said maybe the girls had been out-bluffed. A little dark-haired Bunny said sure, it would cost the Club a hell of a lot if we all quit together. What would they do? "Bring in girls from the other Clubs," said baby voice. "You can't win." There was a piano at center stage. She went over to it and pretended to play a jazz arrangement that was being piped into the room. "Laaaa-tee-la-tee-tum," sang baby voice. A Bunny with long brown hair got up and went through the motions of a very professional striptease. "They asked me to be a Playmate once," she said, "but I couldn't do it now. I'm too thin." The little dark-haired Bunny told her it didn't matter because they always used a fake, composite body anyway, and that she personally knew the girl who did the breasts. I said I doubted it very

much, because there's only so much you can do with an air brush. "Anyway, they must use different girls," said the stripping Bunny, "because the breasts are in different shapes." "They co-omme in different shapes," sang baby voice, and got up to do her own striptease. She took off her bow tie, collar and cuffs and tossed them off the stage, accompanying each with an expert bump.

"O.K., girls," said the Room Director. "Cut it." Three middle-aged customers, the first of the lunchtime onslaught, were squinting into the spot-lit gloom from the doorway.

"Wouldn't you know it," said baby voice, disgusted. "Here come the suckers."

Serving lunch is somewhat easier. Four hours isn't quite enough to open up all my old foot wounds, but the piled-up plates of roast beef (which is all we serve: our Room Director is called "The Roast Beef King") make a tray even heavier than a full load of drinks. Bunnies new to each room seem to get a trial by fire. I again had the station farthest from the bar and the kitchen. And the customers are all men. The heavy sprinkling of dates and wives in the evening crowd disappears, and the average male customer seems older and his face more florid. One told me over and over again that he was vice president of an insurance company and that he would pay me to serve at a private party in his hotel. Another got up from his fourth martini to breathe heavily down my neck. When I

pulled away, he was sincerely angry. "What do you think I come here for," he said, "roast beef?"

At 3:00, when the final table had been cleared, I went back to the Bunny Room. The wardrobe mistress stopped me as I passed. "Baby," she said, "that costume is way too big on you." It was true that I had lost ten pounds in the few days since the costume had been made, and it was also true that, for the first time, it was no more uncomfortable than a tight girdle. She marked the waist with pins and told me to take it off. "I'll have it fitting you right when you come tomorrow," she said. "Needs two inches off on each side."

I took the same copy of *Playboy Club News* out of my locker: "The Playboy Club world is filled with good entertainment, beautiful girls, fun-loving playboys... it's always on the go, like a continuous house party. Cheerful Bunnies feel as though they are among the invited guests..." My co-workers from the Playroom giggled. "Some party," said baby voice. "You're not even supposed to go out with the customers." I asked if any of the Willmark representatives tried to trap her into going out. "Nooooo," she said thoughtfully, "but one did offer another Bunny \$200 just for promising she'd meet him after work." "What happened?" "She took it," said baby voice contemptuously, and shook her head in wonder. "She should have known. Nobody but a shmuck or a Willmark man would offer you the

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money before," she said wisely.

Tuesday **12th**

Two of my classmates from Bunny School, Gloria and the ex-magician's assistant, joined us in the Playroom today. I found myself explaining how to serve drinks and roast beef and how to convince the customer that it was rare, medium or well-done, though it was, in fact, all the same.

Some offices were closed for Lincoln's Birthday and business was slow. I sat at the edge of the stage and listened to the un-stuffed Bunny explain that she liked older men because they gave you money. "I went out with this old guy I met in the Club last week, and fixed up two other Bunnies with his friends. You know, he gave me a hundred-dollar check just because he liked me? I didn't do anything, honest. He just liked me." I asked how she knew this one wasn't a Willmark man. "Well, if they drink more than two drinks, you're safe. Anyhow, that's the rule I use."

The un-stuffed Bunny went on to tell how one of the Playboy executives had given her \$700 for a dress. "I had \$500," she said, "and I bought a dress for \$1,200 and he took me to a party in it." A dark-haired Bunny said yes, she knew the same guy in Chicago. "Doesn't everybody?" said the un-stuffed Bunny. "If you counted all the Bunnies who went out with that guy, you... well, you couldn't count them." The dark-haired Bunny looked pensive. "We had this crazy thing going for three weeks," she said. "It was wild. I guess I should have known that nothing would come of it..." "All the girls think something will come of it," said the un-stuffed Bunny comfortingly, "but it never does." They went on to discuss the personal attributes of this executive, his huge apartment, his great wealth and his romantic impulsiveness. He sounded like an artist in over-kill. "Somebody ought to warn girls that nothing's ever going to come of it," said the dark-haired Bunny. Un-stuffed got up to serve a customer, and the dark-haired Bunny looked after her with disdain. "I don't believe he ever gave her \$700 for a dress," she said firmly. "Nobody ever gets money out of him."

Wednesday **13th**

The Chinese Bunny disclosed today that she uses gym socks to stuff her bosom, thus completing my unofficial list of Bunny Bosom Stuffers:

- 1) Kleenex
- 2) plastic dry cleaner's bags
- 3) absorbent cotton
- 4) cut-up Bunny tails
- 5) foam rubber
- 6) lamb's wool
- 7) Kotex halves
- 8) silk scarves
- 9) gym socks

After work today, I shuffled through the stacks of Bunny literature in Sheralee's office and found a memo dated December 4, 1962, that

I had not seen before. It was a list of all those who hold "Initial" or Number One Keys. According to our Bunny Mother Lecture, these are the Playboy executives, members of the press and others important to Playboy whose checks are paid by the Club. They are the only men met through the Club with whom we may go out.

The press names form a pretty uniform list of the gossip columnists and entertainment editors to whom many big restaurants and nightclubs extend hospitality. (There are even three women: Dorothy Kilgallen of the *Journal-American*, Gwen Harrison of the *Miami Herald* and Maggie Daly, whose *Chicago American* column, "Daly Diary," has been reprinted in the *Playboy Club News*.) But there do seem to be some inequities. The *New York Herald Tribune's* Hy Gardner is listed, but there is no one from the *New York Times*. Frank Farrell of the *World-Telegram* is on, but Walter Winchell of the *Daily Mirror* is not. Television men appear on the Chicago and Miami lists, but there are no radio or TV representatives from New York.

I saw no names at all that I recognized as society columnists. Hugh Hefner has written that the New York Club "has already become the favorite dining, drinking and meeting place of New York... society," but I'm sure that the list included no names of society reporters.

A girl in the Bunny Room asked me to zip her up. I told her I had been looking at the Number One Keyholder list and asked if there were any other people whom it was all right to date. "Well, you can date customers if you can get away with it." I said I knew, but that I didn't want to get fired and that I wondered what men we could go out with. "You can go out with guys introduced to you by Number One Keyholders," she said, "or anyone you meet at Vic Lowne's parties." We had been told about the parties given at Vic Lowne's apartment in New York or Hugh Hefner's house in Chicago and encouraged to go to them. They were evidently promotion and business entertaining for the Clubs or the magazine. "They're great parties," she said. "Vic is out of town for a while, but there'll be more when he comes back. They like you to come as long as you don't bring your own date."

Friday **15th**

The Playroom was crowded today, full of men drinking, because it was Friday afternoon. I ran from tables to bar and back again carrying plates of roast beef and the Friday-only alternate, trout. Bunny Gloria was standing with a tray full of cups, waiting for the coffee urn to be filled. "You know what we are?" she said indignantly. "We're waitresses!" I said maybe we ought to join a union. "Unions just take your money," said baby voice, "and they won't let you work double shifts."

The magician's assistant was serving a table next to mine and agreeing earnestly that our costumes were

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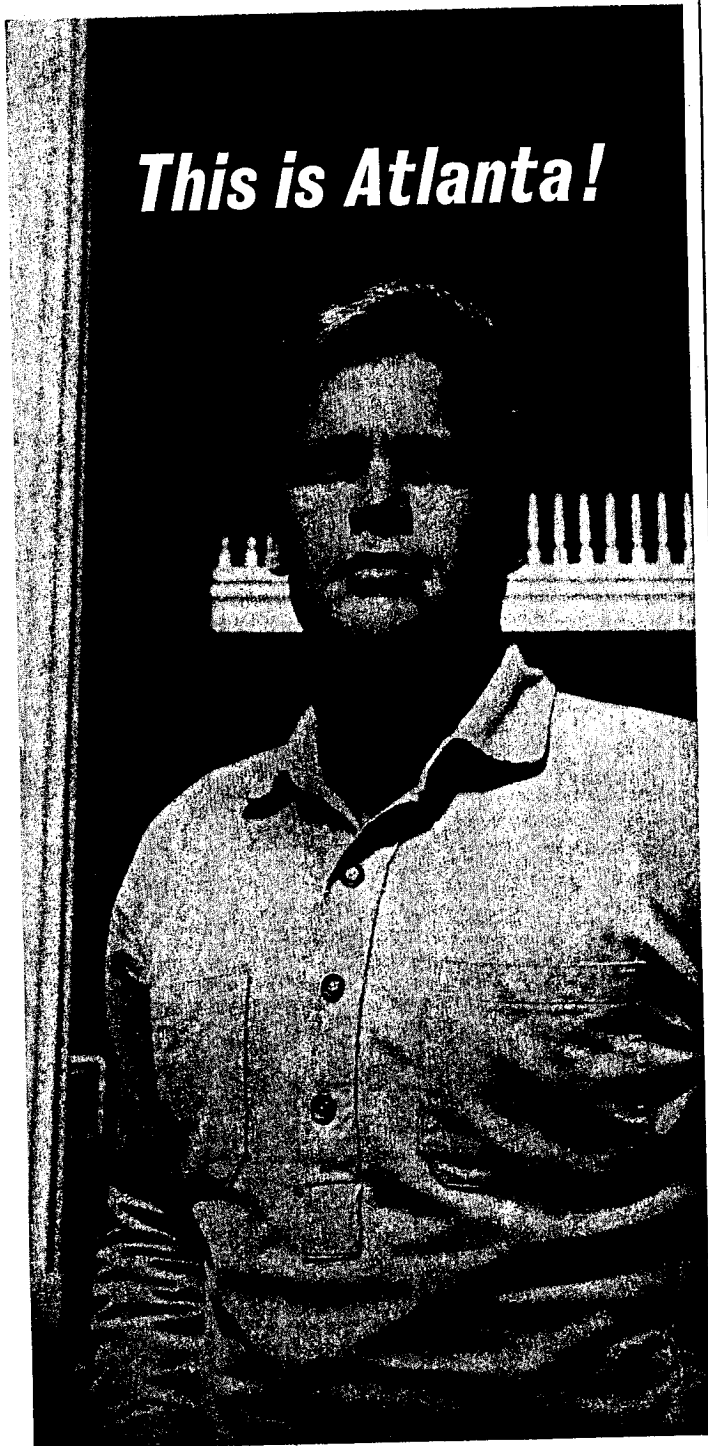
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"so intelligently made, so flattering to a girl's body." She had been nervous and flustered all week. She tried so hard to do things, as the Bunny Bible said, "like a gracious hostess," that she might never become an efficient waitress. In programing us with, as one Bunny put it, "all that glamor crap," the Club sometimes defeated itself.

It was my last day of lunches and I was glad. Somehow, the usual tail-pullings and propositions and pinching and ogling seemed all the more depressing when, outside this spot-lit, blank-walled room, the sun was shining.

I found Sheralee in her office and told her the story I had planned to tell, that my mother was ill and I had to go home for a while. She was dismayed. "But we're so short of Bunnies *now!*" she said, and asked when I could come back. I had chosen my story because it would leave the door open for me to work again should I need more information. I told her I didn't know, that I would call her. "Well, I'll start scheduling you again on Thursday just in case," she said, and gave me my first week's paycheck: \$35.90 net for two nights in the Living Room. What about my first night at the hat check stand? "You don't get paid for training," said Sheralee. I protested that it wasn't training. "I'll talk to the bookkeeper," she said, doubtfully.

I sat next to a Bunny I knew slightly and took off my makeup.

Thursday 21st

Nearly a week had passed. I called Sheralee to say that I had just come back to pick up my clothes and that I would have to quit permanently. She pleaded with me to work the Playmate Bar tonight, just one more night, and somehow (might I learn something new?) I found myself saying yes.

Friday 22nd

But it was just the same:

Room Director: "That's your station, four fours and three deuces."

Customer: "If you're my Bunny,

can I take you home with me?"

Bartender: "They keep changing the size of the shots, up and down, up and down. It's enough to drive you crazy."

Bunny: "I worked that LoLo Cola private party and they gave me a six-pack. Big deal."

Customer: "I'm in the New Yorker Hotel, Room 625. Can you remember that?"

Man: "If little girls were blades of grass, what would little boys be?"

Bunny: "Ummm...lawn mowers?"

Man: "No. Grasshoppers!"

Sign in supply room:

"This is your home.

Please don't throw coffee grinds in sink."

Busboy: "The money's coming out of your costume, sweetie."

Bunny: "He's a real gentleman. He treats you just the same whether you've slept with him or not."

Bunny: "Ordering three 7 Crown, two beers and a Playboy Punch."

It was 4 A.M. I went to the Bunny Room and took off my costume. A pretty blonde was putting chairs together to sleep on. She had promised to take another girl's lunch shift after her regular eight hours in the Playmate Bar, and there wasn't time to go home in between. I asked why she did it. "Well," she said, "the money's not too bad. Last week I made \$200."

At last I had found a girl who made the promised salary.

I walked into Sheralee's office. Pinned to the bulletin board was a list of cities next in line for Playboy Clubs (Pittsburgh, Boston, Dallas and Washington, D.C.) and a yellow printed sheet titled **WHAT IS A BUNNY?**

"A Bunny," began the text, "like the Playboy Playmate, is the girl next door. She is... beautiful, desirable, and a nice fun-loving person. ... We'll do everything in our power to help make you—the Bunny—the most envied girl in America, working in the most exciting and glamorous setting in the world."

I turned in my costume for the last time. "So long, honey," said the blonde. "See you in the funnies." □

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